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ISLAND AND ISLANDNESS: THE CASE OF MAURITIUS

Lecture | Roundtable Discussion

Islands are far from being standalone entities. They are often enriched by movements, connections and exchanges of the outside world (both immediate and distant). This often helps to shape the identity, spirit and idiosyncrasies of the place.

Mauritius is such a place. A number of questions will be explored during this panel to shed light on: What is it to live on an island? How is the space negotiated? How are traditional allies and new friends played off? Is the island's expanded footprint a blessing or curse?

Guest Speakers:
Roukaya Kasenally, Kumari Issur & Ramola Ramtohul
University of Mauritius

Outflows, Externalities and Agency |

Roukaya Kasenally (Democracy Scholar, Associate Professor, UoM)

At the crossroads between Africa and Asia, Mauritius' geopolitical location is considered as the 'ideal' place for exchanges and connections. New players (in addition to traditional players) such as India and China are important development actors offering a different form of engagement. This presentation will explore some of the key opportunities but also some concerns that require due reflection.

Islandness and Gender Politics |

Ramola Ramtohul (Sociology and Gender Studies, Associate Professor, UoM)

Island states are characterised by factors of scale, boundedness, isolation, and fragmentation. Indeed, small states are more likely to have a more conservative political culture, which hinders social change and progress requiring significant political capital. Drawing from the Mauritian case study, I discuss the gender dimensions of small scale and islandness on women's participation and representation.

From Island State to Ocean State |

Kumari Issur (French Studies, Associate Professor, UoM)

In 2012, the Republic of Mauritius redefined itself as an ocean state on the basis of its vast EEZ. The change in configuration from island state to ocean state poses several challenges, inter alia, geopolitical, ontological, or simply practical ones. I examine a few of the issues that the new cartography raises for Mauritians.